



A ZOOM EVENING POT POURRI

by Tim Kenny

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Six Plays which can be performed on Zoom providing an entertaining evening

'Green Fingers' (3M - 30 mins)) - a chance meeting in a coffee takes a dangerous turn of bluff and counter bluff.

'Mother' (1F - 3 mins) - How to get rid of a spiteful mother

Hedge (1m,1F - 2 min) - An argument develops about the height of a hedge

'Shackles' (1 M,1F - 25 minutes). A carer looking after an elderly man.

'Party' (1M - 2 mins) A man watches his wife gathering for a family gathering but not all is as it seems.

'School Speech' (1M - 3 mins). A dated recording has been found of Sir Bernard Norman Baldock addressing his old school

Green Fingers

By

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CHARACTERS

Doug

Man

Arnott

A café. There is a table with two chairs. A man is sitting at the table. There is a cup of coffee in front of him. He looks at his mobile constantly. He appears agitated. A siren in a police car or ambulance can be heard and then it fades. Doug enters carrying a tray with a cup of coffee together with a lemon cake on a plate. He looks around as though seeking somewhere to sit then approaches the man.

Doug: May I sit here? D’you mind? The place is very crowded.

Man: Help yourself.

Doug: Market day.

Man: Market day?

Doug: It’s always busy on market days. I’m going to some shopping there a bit later. You can get some good veg bargains when they start to close.

Man: Is that right?

(The man looks at his mobile. He is irritated. Long pause)

Doug: You waiting for someone?

Man: A message that’s all.

Doug: I only get messages from my wife. She wants some PSB for tonight. *(Pause)*. Purple sprouting broccoli.

Man: I do know what that is.

Doug: It’s very expensive. That’s why I wait until the market is wrapping up. Cheaper then. Oh, and asparagus. I’m doing the cooking. I always do the cooking on my day off. My girls don’t like PSB. They prefer peas.

(Doug sips coffee, cuts into the lemon cake and eats a piece)

They do very good lemon cake here. Plenty of lemon drizzle. Have you tried it?

(Long silence. Another siren sounds)

Ambulance. I hate that sound, don't you? If I was in an ambulance with that siren blaring I would die of worry. You know – thinking that if the siren is sounding there must be something *really* seriously wrong with me.

(Silence. The man looks at his mobile)

Still no message? Perhaps she's not going to come. Sorry. I was just guessing.

Man: Well don't.

(Silence. The man looks about him)

Doug: I don't know what they do with all the waste.

Man: Pardon?

Doug: You know when the market closes. I mean you can't keep veg forever. PSB goes that dull yellow colour. Broccoli's the same. And potatoes start getting those little root things.

Man: Haulms

Doug: That's right. My wife grows the potatoes.

Man: You need a lot of mulch. Hay and straw mulch is the best.

Doug: You a gardener?

Man: Once. Now if you'll excuse....

Doug: I'm not good at gardening. Not got green fingers. Haven't the patience I suppose. My wife's the one. *(Pause)* Always out in the garden. She'd be there 'til midnight if I put up floodlights.

Man: Mad!

Doug: Would you like a piece of this lemon cake? Very rude of me not to offer since you agreed I could sit here.

Man: No

Doug: *(Sighs)*. Funny thing that. Makes your wee smell.

Man: Lemon cake?

Doug: Asparagus. Haven't you noticed?

Man: No.

Doug: You're like my wife. She can't either. Smell asparagus in your wee that is. They say it's either a genetic thing that breaks down the sulphur.

Man: Asparagus absorbs it from the soil.

Doug: Is that right? You know a lot about gardening.

Man: A bit.

Doug: Some people can't detect that awful stale cabbagey smell at all when they go to the loo. Others do. Funny that.

Man: I'm...

Doug: There's a theory that it's got something to do with a gene that prevents some people smelling it. I read that in the Daily Mail. You sure you wouldn't like a piece of this drizzle cake?

Man: No. Now could you stop rabbiting on?

(Silence punctuated by another siren)

Doug: Sorry. It's my job. Talking to people. Weighing them up.

Man: What d'you mean weighing them up?

Doug: You know...

Man: No.

Doug: Working out if they're genuine. Wanting to make a purchase in the shop. In my line, the curious people are always the most nervous.

Man: Are they?

Doug: You look a bit nervous to me.

Man: Do I?

Doug: Sort of stressed. Worrying about something.

Man: Is that a fact?

Doug: And sweating. You're sweating. Must be a serious message you're waiting for.

Man: Just waiting that's all....

Doug: What's your name?

Man: Why?

Doug: Oh, nothing. Just wondered.

Man: Phil.

Doug: I'm Douglas. Doug for short. I had a brother called Phillip. He's was always Phillip. Never Phil.

Man: Oh.

Doug: Got killed in a house fire.

Man: Sorry.

Doug: We weren't close. Lit a cigarette in bed....

Man: I'll try your drizzle cake.

Doug: Of course, I do seem to have rather a lot of it. Not all together good for you know what.

(Taps waistline and cuts off a piece of cake. The man eats it slowly. Pause)

Nice isn't it? They always do a good lemon drizzle in here.

Man: So you said.

Doug: And brownies. I sometimes buy one of those and have it with my coffee in work. During my break. But I have to make sure there are no crumbs around my mouth. You can't have crumbs around your mouth when greeting customers in the shop....

Man: The shop?

Doug: Yes. I'm the Assistant Manager.

Man: Are you?

Doug: Yes. I believe in standards. The girls chewing gum. That sort of thing. Sounds a bit old-fashioned I know. But standards are standards. ...Ten years I've been there.

Man: Time flies.

Doug: I would like to be the Manager but Mister Arnott.

Man: Mister Arnott?

Doug: Yes. He owns the shop. That's not his real name. Well, he thinks I'm not very good at figures so he appoints a manager to head the team. 'But you're the backbone of this shop, Doug,' he says to me. 'Where would we be without you? Nowhere. That's where.' Of course, the managers never stay. Not interested. Don't want to learn the trade. Mostly they seem to hire the prettiest girls and then... you know ...

Man: What?

Doug: Sometimes even out the back in the office.

Man: What did you say your shop was called?

Doug: Arnotts. But, as I said, it's my day off today.

Man: Lucky you.

Doug: There's no luck about it. It's in my contract. I get a day off in the week and an extra day off every month because I have to work three Saturdays in four.

Man: Arnotts? Is that the

Doug: Jewellers. That's right. We've got an exhibition of emeralds at the moment. I like emeralds. Do you?

Man: They're alright. Just green stones.

Doug: Oh, not just green stones. It's beryl with traces of chromium. Sometimes vanadium. Mister Arnott specialises in emeralds. We've got some flawless ones on show. Almost four carats. Really beautiful. Mister Arnott used to get them from Afghanistan and Zambia but now they're all from Columbia. He's just returned from there. We sell emeralds all over the country.

Man: Very interesting.

Doug: And other gems. I love them.

Ma: Love what?

Doug: Emeralds. Pliny the Elder – he was a Roman something or other - said of them: 'nothing greens greener'. They're also supposed to relieve worry. They'd be good for someone like you. You have to hold one and look at it closely.

Man: Really.

Doug: Yes, for your stress.

Man: Me?

Doug: Yes – all anxious and worried. Fidgeting and worried. And you haven't finished that piece of drizzle cake I gave you.

Man: Things on my mind. Can we just – you know – shut it.

Doug: Okay. I understand. I'll finish my coffee and go...I'm sorry I went on a bit. Bad habit I know.

(He sips coffee and prepares to stand up. His mobile rings. He looks at the text)

Would you believe it!

(He sits down in shock)

We've been robbed. Our assistant, Clare, has been shot. Erm...erm... Oh, my God! Police are there. I'd better call and see what's happened. They might need me.

Man: What for?

Doug: I dunno. Help. They might want to interview me?

Man: Who?

Doug: The police.... Clare's been shot! Oh...That's dreadful. Poor Clare

Man: You weren't there.

Doug: I know but...but people who do a robbery often case the joint.

Man: Case?

Doug: You know, pay an earlier visit on some pretence or other. We were robbed once before and I was able to help the police identify the suspects – the way they

walked, their voice from the video. Mannerisms..... Can't believe it! I'll ring the shop. Ask about Clare. See if I'm wanted.

(He makes the call on his mobile.)

Annabelle. It's Douglas.....Poor Clare. ...How serious.....I see.... You don't know yet....the hospital...Who was it? Three of them... yes, a van with two of them drove off.....where did the third go?.....Yes, go on... short, stocky....and..yes..go on...

(He looks at the man)

...about thirty wearing a blue bomber jacket.

(He peers carefully over the table and sees the man is sitting on a blue bomber jacket. The man is texting on his phone not listening to Doug)

I'll come right away....And Clare?.... Oh dear. See you in twenty minutes.

(He stands still holding his mobile. He stares at the man)

It's you. Isn't it?

Man: I don't know what you mean.

Doug: You're waiting for someone. You didn't get away with the others. Someone is coming to pick you up. Some mate.

Man: Ridiculous.

Doug: The police haven't issued a description yet. But they will. TV. Six o'Clock News. But our Annabelle told me what one of them looked like and it fits your description. Even the blue bomber jacket.

Man: Lots of people fit my description. And blue bomber jackets...so what?

Doug: I'll call the police. They can check.

Man: Will you now? Sit down. Go on. Sit down.

Doug: No. I'm going to call the police.

Man: Douglas. It is Douglas isn't it? There's a gun under this table and it's pointing directly at you. So why don't you get back in your seat, eh? You're quite right. My friend will soon be here and then I'll be gone.

(Doug looks around and then sits cautiously. The man has one hand under the table.)

Doug: You won't get away with it.

Man: The others did.

Doug: You going to shoot me? You can't in a café like this.

Man: Where would you prefer to be shot?

Doug: No where..... you know what I mean. Too many people will have seen you.

Man: People forget in the confusion of gunfire. They're too busy worrying about their safety.

Doug: Please..please don't do anything....Did you shoot her?

Man: You mean, your Clare? She surprised me that's all. Stupid girl. I didn't know she was there. Some fat redhead came out of the back of the shop with some skinny guy.

Doug: David. Our manager. And Clare - she's not fat.

Man: What is she is then?

Doug: A bit generous. In fact, Clare...

Man: Can you just shut up?

Doug: She's an only child. If you've killed her...

Man: I told you. Shut up! It was an accident. Safety catch was off.
(He looks at phone)
Someone's on their way.

Doug: I don't believe this.

Man: You'd better.

Doug: You're not going to get away with this.

Man: So you said. And who's going to stop me, eh? Eh? You? That's a laugh.

Doug: Don't shoot will you? Please, please.

Man: Why not?

Doug: I don't want to get shot.

Man: Good a reason as any I suppose. So what would you do in my place? Given that you now know me - in a manner of speaking

Doug: I, I,... I don't know. I can't un-recognise you. But here. Everybody will remember you. You shoot me and you'll draw attention to yourself. You're not going to shoot, please. I've got a family.

Man: Scared?

Doug: Yes. I, I...

Man: Who's stressed and worried now, eh?

Doug: I don't want to get hurt. I don't want you to hurt anyone.

Man: I bet you've got a thing for faces.

Doug: I'm not going to say anything about this. Really.